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CHAPTER
5

ONE WEEK AFTER SENSEI CUT OFF CONTACT.
CHATTER
SENSEI,
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
CHATTER

I CAN'T TURN SOMETHING LIKE THIS IN.
IT'S AL-RIGHT.
EVEN IF YOU'RE UNABLE TO FIX IT
BUT TIME IS...
I'LL FIX IT A LITTLE MORE.
PLEASE BE SURE TO TURN IT IN, AS-IS, THIS TIME.
I
FORGOT THAT IT'S MY READERS I DRAW FOR...
I UNDER-STAND.
I'M SORRY, BUT
I NEED TO FOCUS, SO PLEASE DON'T CONTACT ME BY PHONE FOR AWHILE.
SENSEI ...
I WANT TO DO THIS FOR MY READERS.

THAT WAY, I CAN BE SURE TO FINISH THE MANU-SCRIPT.
...
HUH?
IT'S BEEN A WEEK?
GET KUROI ON THE PHONE RIGHT NOW.
SURELY YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENS TO HER WORK IF SHE DOESN'T TURN IT IN BY THE DEADLINE.
...
I'M SORRY, I CAN'T DO THAT.

IS IT ALRIGHT? WE CAN EXTEND IT TO...
THE MORNING OF THE 26TH!
IS THIS THE PRINTING DEPARTMENT?
ABOUT THE PRINTING DATE OF KUROI-SENSEI'S MANU-SCRIPT...
SINCE IT'S SENSEI, IT'LL BE ALRIGHT!
I'LL MAKE THE NEGO-TIATIONS WITH THE PRINTING DEPART-MENT!
BOW BOW
SORRY FOR CAUSING ANY TROUBLE!
THANK YOU SO MUCH ...!
WE CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER THAN THAT!
THIS IS GOING TO BE THE FINAL DATE THOUGH!
I'M REALLY NOT QUALIFIED TO BE DISCUSSING THE MANU-SCRIPT LIKE THIS...
But...
7
Meeting with Kano
8
13
17
Meeting
18
19
24
25
Dinner with Komatsu-san
26
28

I FINISHED THE MANU-SCRIPT...!
RIIING
HELLO! SWEET'S EDITORIAL DEPART-MENT.
IT'S KUROI!
...!
NOW I JUST HAVE TO BELIEVE IN HER ...
THIS LITTLE BIT IS ALL I CAN DO FOR SENSEI ...
I'M SO SORRY.
I GOT CAUGHT UP WITH PROOF-READING ...
Editorial Department

I'VE SCREWED UP OUR PLANS TONIGHT...
I HAVE THIS HUGE DEADLINE TOMORROW MORNING.
AND SINCE SENSEI HASN'T GIVEN ME THE MANUSCRIPT YET, I NOW HAVE TO GO TO HER APARTMENT TO GET IT...
I SEE.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A PAIN.
I'M SO SORRY, KOMATSU-SAN, AND YOU EVEN CAME ALL THE WAY INTO TOKYO...
AND EVEN TO MY WORK...
OH NO, IT'S FINE! I WAS IN THE CITY ANYWAY!
IT'S JUST... DURING THE MARRIAGE INTERVIEW.
YOU SEEMED LIKE YOU WERE A LITTLE OUT OF IT?
!

SO I THOUGHT MAYBE WE COULD GET TOGETHER WHEN YOU WEREN'T SO PREOCCUPIED.
I JUST THOUGHT SOMETHING WAS BOTHERING YOU, THAT'S ALL
OH NO NO!
I'M SORRY ...
... UHHH ...
SLUMP
UH ...
I, UH ...
THAT'S BE-CAUSE ...
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
THAT IS...
AH ...
THE TRUTH IS, I STILL AM.
THAT WAS...
I WAS ACTUALLY REALLY WORRIED ABOUT WORK...
——...

A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON
HAS GOTTEN VERY UPSET WITH ME.
...
AN IMPORTANT PERSON ...
THUMP
UM ...
DOES THAT—
ARE YOU STILL TALKING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

ふ～ふふ～
E-EXCUSE ME!
BZZZT BZZZT
COMING CALL DI RITSU
WHAT ...?
HELLO, SENSEI?

HOW'S THE INKING GOING?

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN WHILE TYPE-SETTING...?

HUH?

YOU RAN OUT OF SCREEN-TONER?

?

I- I'M SORRY... THIS DRAFT JUST REQUIRES SO MUCH ...

AND I FORGOT THE EXTRA TONER ...

WH- WHAT SHOULD I DO... THE ART SHOPS ARE CLOSED BY NOW, AND I CAN'T GET IT ONLINE FAST ENOUGH.

THE ASSISTANTS ALSO HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL...

WHAT SHADE OF TONER DO YOU NEED?

IS THERE ANOTHER KIND OF TONE YOU CAN USE INSTEAD?

...

←"MISAKI"

PROTAGONIST NEEDS A LOT

WITH NO TONER HER HAIR IS PURE WHITE.

...

UM

IT'S THE TONER FOR "MISAKI'S" HAIR...

I'M S-SORRY ...
YOU'RE NOT CAUSING ME TROUBLE.
IN THE END, I REALLY CAUSED YOU TROUBLE ...
THIS IS MY JOB AFTER ALL!
WHAT'S THE PATTERN NUMBER AND MANUFACTURER FOR THE TONER?
IS THERE ANY OTHER SPECIFICATION I NEED TO KNOW?
I UNDERSTAND!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT!
SO PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT
AND FOCUS ON DRAWING FOR YOUR READERS!
... UGH

I'M SORRY I CAN'T SEE YOU OFF!
RUN
BOW
I'M SORRY.
TURN
THIS IS A BIT OF AN EMERGENCY.
CLINK
AND FOCUS ON DRAWING FOR YOUR READERS!
SQUEEZE
HARUKA-SAN...

SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
SEN-SEI ...
KONNO-SAN,
CAN YOU PLEASE GIVE ME SAKURAI-SENSEI AND MITSURUGI-SENSEI'S PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES?
CAN YOU ALSO GIVE ME THEIR CELL NUMBERS AS WELL?
HUH?
WHAT HAPPENED?
RAN OUT OF TONER?
IS IT REALLY OK TO BE DOING THIS SO LAST-MINUTE?

WHAT'S WRONG?
UM,
I'M HARUKA FROM THE SWEETS EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.
I'M SORRY IT'S SO LATE.
COULD YOU POSSIBLY LEND ME #62 TONER FROM DELETER?
I'LL BUY SOME REPLACEMENTS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
YES, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I'M HEADING OVER RIGHT NOW.
SQUEEH
KICHIJOUJI PLEASE.
EVEN THOUGH THIS IS AN EMERGENCY...

HIS AP
BE DOING
SOMETHING
(SUSPENSED)
BAKE

I JUST COULDN'T BEAR TELLING SENSEI THAT I'M LEAVING!

IF I QUIT...

I CAN'T QUIT

AFTER ALL, SENSEI IS THE ONE WHO TURNED ME INTO THE PERSON I AM TODAY...!

I'VE FINISHED ...
... THE INKING
CLACK
CLACK
UMM ...
AH ...
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE "DELICATE" HAIR, IT'S FINISHED.
LEAVE THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO US!
IT'S ALRIGHT.

SLAM
SO HURRY UP AND GET THAT TONER!
...
THANK YOU ...
SLAM
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
THE PHONE YOU HAVE CALLED IS CURRENTLY TURNED OFF
OR OUT OF SERVICE ...
CALLING HADA HARUKA
BEEP

HELLO, SWEETS EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.
!
BAT-DUMP!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE
!
UM
IT'S BEEN SO LONG! YOU HAVEN'T SHOWN YOUR FACE AT ANY OF OUR GET-TOGETHERS!
HAVEN'T REALLY SPOKEN SINCE WE STOPPED WORKING TOGETHER, HAVE WE?
YES.

SHE WAS TRYING ONE LAST PLACE WHEN I LAST HEARD FROM HER.
SHE'S OUT GATHERING TONER FROM OTHER ARTISTS' FLIGHTS.
SHE SHOULD TURN UP SOON, RIGHT?
HARUKA-SAN...
HADA-SAN, DO YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS...
...
SO LATE AT NIGHT, RUNNING AROUND, CALLING IN FAVORS...

IT ALSO SEEMS SHE'S BEEN TRYING TO DRAW YOU OUT OF YOUR SHELL
SHE CERTAINLY PUT A TON OF EFFORT INTO GETTING YOU TO SEE YOUR OWN NEIGHBOR-HOOD...
HOW-EVER ...
CRAP, MY CELL IS DEAD.
I CAN'T CONTACT SENSEI ...
EX-CUSE ME.
SQUEEZE
WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO GO A LITTLE FASTER?
SHE'S A GOOD GIRL, THAT HADA.

SCREECH
BAM
YES ...!

SENSEI
...